High Quality Performance Measures
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Learning Objectives

- Define performance measurement

- Understand how performance measurement and evaluation differ

- Know how CNCS uses performance measures

- Learn characteristics of high quality performance measures

What is Performance Measurement?

- Ongoing, systematic process of tracking your program or project outputs and outcomes
- **Outputs:** Amount of service provided (people served, products created, or programs developed)
- **Outcomes:** Changes or benefits that occur
  - Can reflect changes in individuals, organizations, communities or the environment
  - Typically include changes in **knowledge, attitude, behavior** or **condition**
  - Must have a logical connection to the intervention and be aligned with outputs
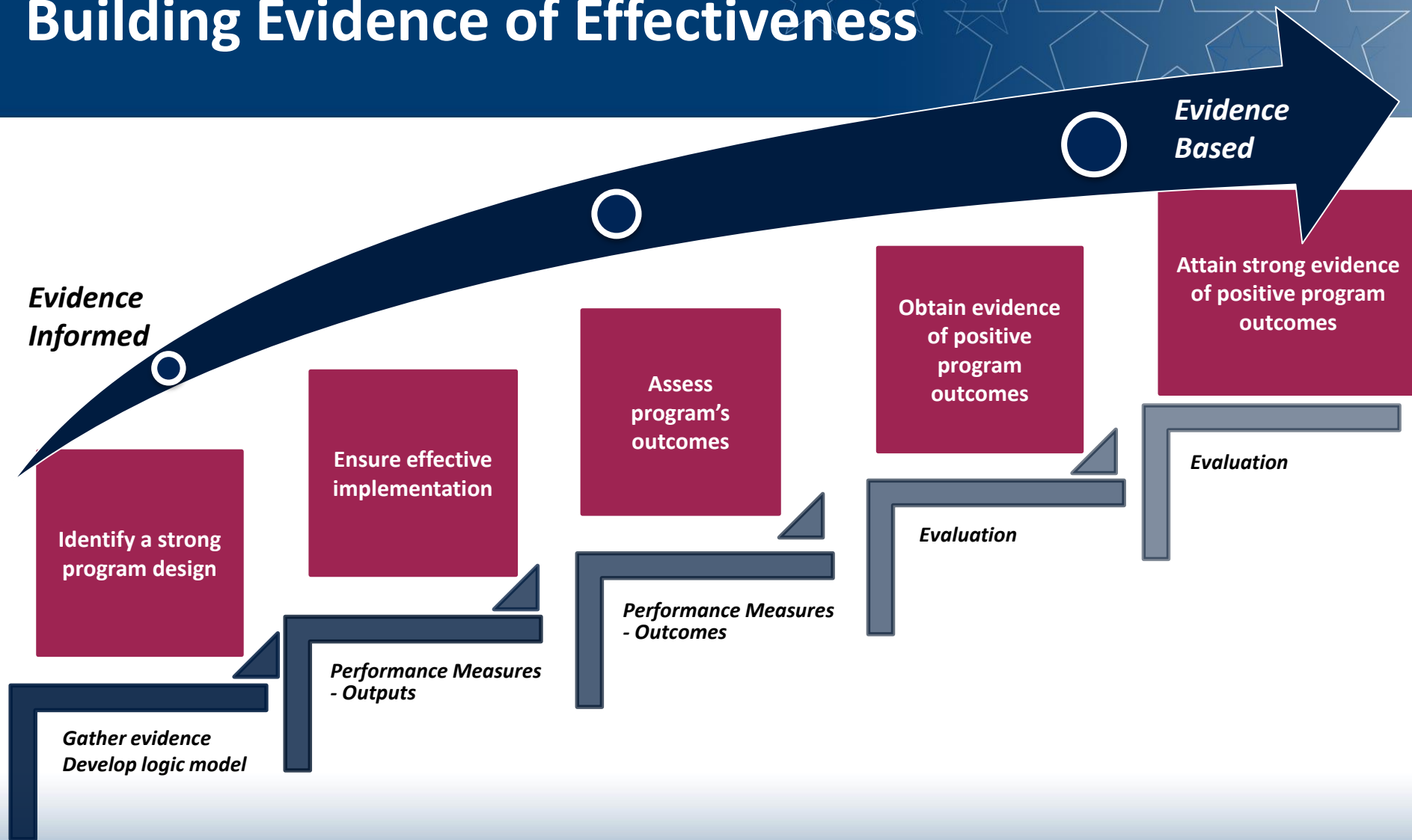
Purpose of Performance Measurement

- Recognition of progress
  - Collect reliable information about the intervention's implementation and progress toward outcomes

- Accountability to funders and stakeholders
  - Communicate achievements in a meaningful and compelling way

- Program Improvement
  - Spot and correct problems
  - Strengthen the intervention
  - Determine where to allocate limited resources

Performance Measurement and Impact Evaluation

Differences: Key Areas	Performance Measurement	Impact Evaluation
Implementation	Monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments and progress	In-depth research activity that assesses whether the program works as expected
Time Focus	Ongoing	Conducted periodically or on an ad-hoc basis
Cause and Effect	Demonstrates if a change occurred, but not why; Change is not attributable to intervention	Tests cause and effect relationship between intervention and outcomes with a comparison or control group;

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Building Evidence of Effectiveness

Evidence Based

Evidence Informed

Attain strong evidence of positive program outcomes

Obtain evidence of positive program outcomes

Assess program's outcomes

Ensure effective implementation

Identify a strong program design

Evaluation

Evaluation

Performance Measures - Outcomes

Performance Measures - Outputs

*Gather evidence
Develop logic model*

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Questions?

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CNCS National Performance Measures

Grantees and sponsors contribute to the National Service story by selecting national performance measures:

– Agency-Wide Priority Measures

– Complementary Program Measures

Agency-Wide Priority Measures

Complementary Program Measures

National Service Narrative

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CNCS National Performance Measures

Reflect the CNCS Strategic Plan and its programming priorities:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans & Military Families
- Capacity Building

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CNCS National Performance Measures

- Grantees and sponsors will use common terms, definitions and measurement approaches.

- CNCS Programs will have specific performance measurement requirements.

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How CNCS Uses Performance Measures

- Tell the story of the collective impact of national service programs

- National Performance Measures:
  - Reflect CNCS Strategic Plan and programming priorities
  - Allow for consistent terms, definitions, and approaches to measurement ("speaking the same language")
  - Priority Measures: used across multiple CNCS programs
  - Complementary Measures: customized for particular programs (e.g., AmeriCorps)

- Applicant-determined Measures*:
  - Intended for programs whose interventions, outputs, or outcomes do not fit under existing National Performance Measures

  *Some National Performance Measures have applicant-determined outcomes

Performance Measure Requirements

- One aligned performance measure (output + outcome) for primary intervention

- Programs may create additional performance measures to measure outcomes of significant program interventions
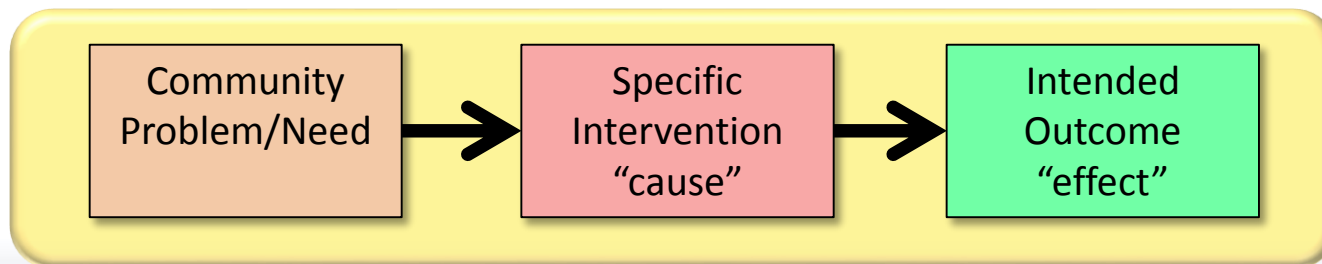
High Quality Performance Measures

- Alignment with theory of change

- Alignment of outputs and outcomes
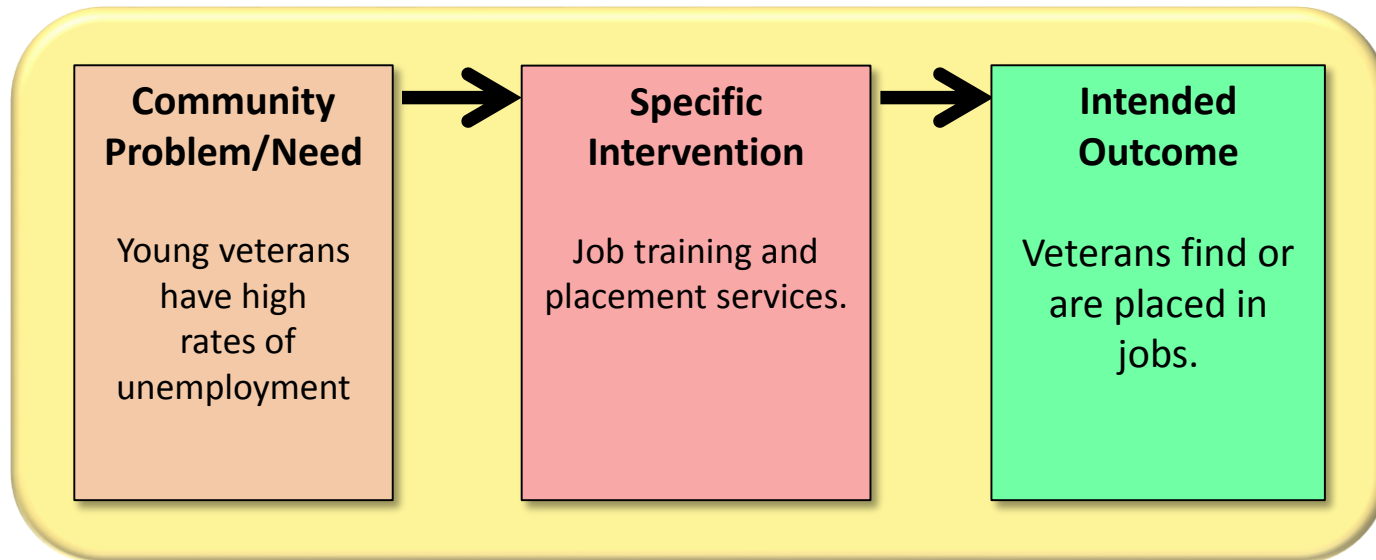
- Meaningful change – Worth measuring

Alignment with Theory of Change

- Logical connection between problem, intervention, outcome

- The intervention is likely to lead to the outcome

- The outcome measures what the intervention is trying to accomplish (change in knowledge, attitude, behavior, condition)

Community Problem/Need	→	Specific Intervention "cause"	→	Intended Outcome "effect"

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Theory of Change: Veterans Example

Community Problem/Need		Specific Intervention		Intended Outcome
Young veterans have high rates of unemployment	→	Job training and placement services.	→	Veterans find or are placed in jobs.

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What is Measured?

- Will the program intervention change attitude, knowledge, behavior or condition?
- Outcome type should be the same as theory of change

Outcomes

Types of Outcomes

Attitude/Belief	Knowledge/Skill	Behavior	Condition
Thought, feeling	Understanding, know-how	Action	Situation, circumstance

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Outcome Examples– Education

Attitude/Belief	Knowledge/Skill	Behavior	Condition
Increased interest in school	Improved math ability	Increased school attendance	Successful completion of High School

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Outcome Examples– Healthy Futures

Attitude/Belief	Knowledge/Skill	Behavior	Condition
Increased desire to adapt good nutrition habits	Improved low-budget cooking skills	Increased healthy food intake	Improved household food security (supply)

# Outcome Examples– Capacity Building

Examples of Change in Condition

- Afterschool services expanded to two new locations
- Reduced waiting time and cost for clients

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Alignment of Outputs and Outcomes

- Intervention produces output
- Output leads to the outcome
- Output and outcome measure the same intervention and beneficiaries
- National Measures aligned as directed in CNCS guidance
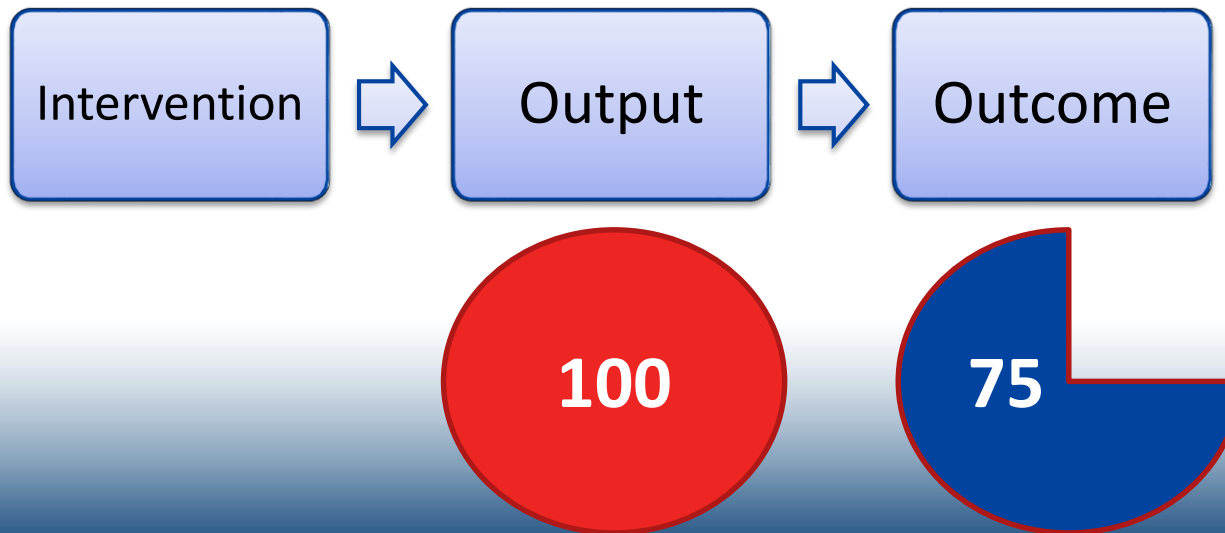
| Intervention | → | Output | → | Outcome |

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Housing Example: Output-Outcome Alignment

INTERVENTION: Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

OUTPUT: Individuals with disabilities receive housing service (upgrades and repairs).

OUTCOME: Construction team members improve construction skills.

- Do the intervention and output align?
  -
  -

- Why or why not?

Housing Example: Output-Outcome Alignment

INTERVENTION: Construction teams assess housing request, plan and execute housing upgrades and repairs and complete inspection requirements for individuals with disabilities.

OUTPUT: *Individuals with disabilities* receive housing service (upgrades and repairs).

OUTCOME: *Construction team members* improve construction skills.

- Do the output and outcome align?
  - ❑ Yes
  - ✓ No

- Why or why not?
- 2 different groups of beneficiaries

Examples of Aligned Output-Outcome National Performance Measures

Focus Area	Output	Outcome
Education	Number of children that completed participation in CNCS-supported early childhood education programs. (ED21)	Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional development.(ED23)

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Examples of Aligned Output-Outcome National Performance Measures

| Focus Area	Output	Outcome
Healthy Futures	Number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger (H11)	Number of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services (H12)

Meaningful Outcomes

The Outcome should:

- Reflect a meaningful change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition

- So what?

- Be ambitious yet realistic

Attitude

Knowledge

Behavior

Condition

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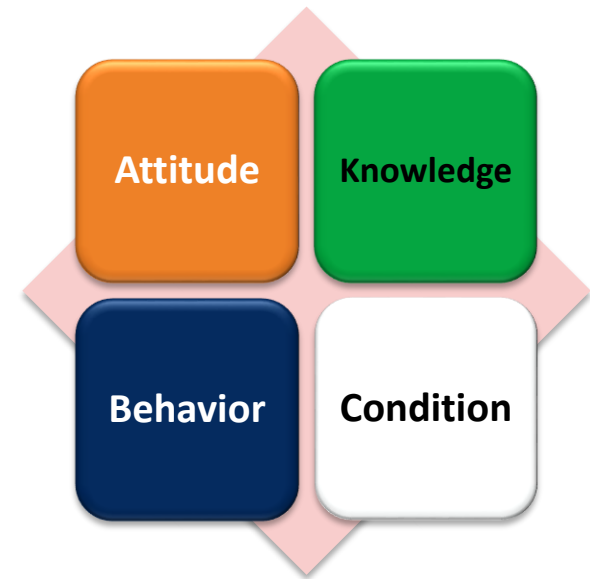
Meaningful Outcome

- Is the outcome logically connected to the community problem?

- Is the outcome central or peripheral to the program's theory of change?

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Meaningful Outcome

- Beneficiaries. Is the target audience identified in the outcome?
- Scope of the outcome. How many will benefit?
- Magnitude of the outcome. How much change will occur for beneficiaries?
- Data collection plan. Are proposed methods/instruments appropriate? Is there a clear plan/timeline for developing instruments and collecting data?

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Best Practices: Performance Measure Design

- Select PMs that fit your program design and theory of change, not vice versa
- Less = more: focus on a small number of high-quality measures
- Measure outputs and outcomes for program beneficiaries*
- Clearly define all terms used
- For longer-term outcomes, set targets that are achievable in a single grant year

Except for member development and teacher corps measures

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Best Practices: Performance Measure Design (continued)

- Use numerical targets, not percentages

- For outcomes that require participant follow-up, set targets that take into account response rate attrition

- Clearly distinguish outcomes from outputs while maintaining logical alignment

- Choose outcome measures that are ambitious but realistic; ensure that the program can realistically document or track the required information.

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Best Practices: Performance Measure Implementation and Data Collection

- Set up MOUs with service sites that clearly lay out data collection responsibilities/expectations

- Provide up-front training in data collection for members, site supervisors, and other program staff

- Obtain baseline data so that changes can be objectively assessed, rather than assessing perceptions of change retroactively

- Select data collection instruments that are valid (measure what they are supposed to measure) and reliable (yield consistent results)

- Keep data collection procedures consistent over time and across different sites

Best Practices: Performance Measure Implementation and Data Collection (cont.)

- Choose data collection instruments that are accessible and yield timely data

- Develop creative ways to improve beneficiary responses to data collection efforts (incentives, etc.)

- Allocate sufficient resources toward data collection efforts: money, time, personnel

- Build in time for data review and verification prior to compiling/submitting reports

- Incorporate data quality review protocols into monitoring visits to sites

- Share best practices between programs/commissions

Questions?

Resources

AmeriCorps Performance Measures Page:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/americorps

CNCS Performance Measurement Core Curriculum:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/training-resources